IN THE CLAIMS

1-3. (canceled).

4. (currently amended) A method for facilitating reconstruction of an image, said method comprising:

estimating a gradient for at least one high-density object using a plurality of reconstructed images separated by a spacing s;

generating a gradient image using the estimated gradient wherein the gradient image represents a variation of the high density object~~ in z;~~ in z; and

generating an error-candidate projection using the gradient image, wherein to generate the error-candidate projection, said method further comprises forward projecting the gradient image along β wherein β represents a projection view angle~~;~~ ~~and~~

~~scaling the error-candidate projection with an error fraction~~ $\cancel{c_\beta}$~~, wherein~~ $\cancel{c_\beta = z - int(z)}$, where $\cancel{z = \frac{(\beta-\beta_c)p}{2\pi} + \frac{M+1}{2}}$~~, wherein~~ $\cancel{\beta_c}$ ~~represents a center view angle, p is the pitch, int(z) represents the integer portion of z, and M represents the number of rows in a detector array~~.

5. (currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 4 further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

scaling the error-candidate projection with an error fraction c_β, wherein $c_\beta = z - int(z)$, where $z = \frac{(\beta-\beta_c)p}{2\pi} + \frac{M+1}{2}$, wherein β_c represents a center view angle, p is the pitch, int(z) represents the integer portion of z, and M represents the number of rows in a detector array; and

reconstructing an error image using the error-candidate projection.

6. (canceled).

7. (currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 4 wherein estimating a gradient for a high-density object comprises estimating a gradient for a high-density object such that $g(i,j) = d_-(i,j) + d_+(i,j) - 2d(i,j)$, where $g(i,j)$ represents the gradient estimate for the (i,j) pixel and $d_-(i,j)$, $d_+(i,j)$, and $d(i,j)$ are determined according to:

$$d_-(i,j) = \begin{cases} f_-(i,j) - h, & f_-(i,j) \geq h \\ 0 & otherwise \end{cases}$$

$$d(i,j) = \begin{cases} f\,(i,j) - h, & f\,(i,j) \geq h \\ 0 & otherwise \end{cases}$$

$$d_+(i,j) = \begin{cases} f_+(i,j) - h, & f_+(i,j) \geq h \\ 0 & otherwise \end{cases}$$

where f, f_-, and f_+ represent three images separated by ~~a spacing~~ the spacing s with f being between f_- and f_+, and h is a pre-determined threshold value.

8. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 4 further comprising helically weighting the error candidate image.

9. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 4 wherein said forward projecting the gradient along β comprises performing at least one of a fan beam forward projection and a parallel beam forward projection.

10. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 4 further comprising producing different gradient images using a segmentation technique.

11. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 10 wherein said producing different gradient images using a segmentation technique comprises:

separating at least two different classes of objects including a first class and a second class;

using a first contrast threshold value for the first class; and

using a second contrast threshold value different from the first contrast threshold value for the second class.

12. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 7 further comprising using more than three adjacent images to produce a gradient image.

13-15. (canceled).

16. (currently amended) A computer programmed to:

estimate a gradient for at least one high-density object using a plurality of reconstructed images separated by a spacing s;

generate a gradient image using the estimated gradient wherein the gradient image represents a variation of the high density object in z;

generate an error-candidate projection using the gradient ~~image;~~ image; and

forward project the gradient image along β wherein β represents a projection view angle~~; and~~

~~scale the error-candidate projection with an error fraction c_β, wherein $c_\beta = z - int(z)$, where $z = \frac{(\beta - \beta_c)p}{2\pi} + \frac{M+1}{2}$, wherein β_c represents a center view angle, p is the pitch, int(z) represents the integer portion of z, and M represents the number of rows in a detector array~~.

17. (currently amended) A computer in accordance with Claim 16 further programmed ~~to~~ to:

scale the error-candidate projection with an error fraction c_β, wherein $c_\beta = z - int(z)$, where $z = \frac{(\beta - \beta_c)p}{2\pi} + \frac{M+1}{2}$, wherein β_c represents a center view angle, p is the pitch, int(z) represents the integer portion of z, and M represents the number of rows in a detector array; and

reconstruct an error image using the error-candidate projection.

18. (canceled).

19. (original) A computer in accordance with Claim 17 further programmed to perform at least one of a fan beam forward projection and a parallel beam forward projection.

20. (currently amended) A computer in accordance with Claim 16 further programmed to estimate a gradient for a high-density object such that $g(i,j) = d_-(i,j) + d_+(i,j) - 2d(i,j)$, where $g(i,j)$ represents the gradient estimate for the (i,j) pixel and $d_-(i,j)$, $d_+(i,j)$, and $d(i,j)$ are determined according to:

$$d_-(i,j) = \begin{cases} f_-(i,j) - h, & f_-(i,j) \geq h \\ 0 & otherwise \end{cases}$$

$$d(i,j) = \begin{cases} f\ (i,j) - h, & f\ (i,j) \geq h \\ 0 & otherwise \end{cases}$$

$$d_+(i,j) = \begin{cases} f_+(i,j) - h, & f_+(i,j) \geq h \\ 0 & otherwise \end{cases}$$

where f, f_-, and f_+ represent three images separated by ~~a spacing~~ <u>the spacing</u> s with f being between f_- and f_+, and h is a pre-determined threshold value.

21. (previously presented) A computer in accordance with Claim 16 further programmed to:

separate at least two different classes of objects including a first class and a second class;

use a first contrast threshold value for the first class; and

use a second contrast threshold value different from the first contrast threshold value for the second class.

22-24. (canceled).

25. (currently amended) A computed tomographic (CT) imaging system for reconstructing an image of an object, said imaging system comprising:

a detector array;

at least one radiation source; and

a computer coupled to said detector array and said radiation source, said computer configured to:

estimate a gradient for at least one high-density object using a plurality of reconstructed images separated by a spacing s;

generate a gradient image using the estimated gradient wherein the gradient image represents a variation of the high density object ~~in z;~~ in z; and

generate an error-candidate projection using the gradient image~~; and~~

~~scale the error-candidate projection with an error fraction e_β, wherein $e_\beta = z - int(z)$, where $z = \frac{(\beta - \beta_c)p}{2\pi} + \frac{M+1}{2}$, wherein β_c represents a center view angle, p is the pitch, int(z) represents the integer portion of z, and M represents the number of rows in a detector array~~.

26. (canceled).